



Making the grade in a better normal

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, virtually everyone living in Canada experienced a challenging year.

In moving towards a better normal, educators and decision-makers must help build awareness of the many benefits that come from being active and limiting sedentary behaviours, and create opportunities for everyone living in Canada to experience them.

A physically active future is vital for a better road ahead.

Here are the grades for three key indicators from the 2021 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults that provide some of the greatest opportunities for improvement:

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Active Transportation

Active transportation is human-powered transportation (e.g., walking, cycling, wheeling) to get to and from places.⁶³

Key findings

- ★ 7% of adults living in Canada use active travel, like walking or cycling to get to work (Statistics Canada, Census 2016).
- ★ 39% of adults indicated that they walk either part or all of the way as a means to get to work or school or to get around generally, and 12% indicated that they bicycle either part or all of the way (CFLRI, custom tabulation, Physical Activity Monitor, 2019-2021).

How do we improve?

- ✓ Include safe active transportation infrastructure in new development and reconstruction projects.
- ✓ Promote and build awareness of local active transportation options.



Light Physical Activity

Light physical activity is activity that requires using up low levels of energy such as walking for leisure, standing work or light housework.³⁵

Key findings

- ★ 56% of adults ages 18-79 years living in Canada get at least 3 hours of light physical activity per day (Statistics Canada, custom tabulation, CHMS, Cycle 6 [2018 and 2019]).
- ★ 58% of men and 53% of women get at least 3 hours of LPA per day (Statistics Canada, custom tabulation, CHMS, Cycle 6 [2018 and 2019]).

How do we improve?

- ✓ Long-term care and extended living facilities should have policies to promote light physical activity for residents.
- ✓ Because light physical activity is beneficial, adults should be encouraged throughout the day to move more and reduce sedentary time.

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Sedentary Behaviours

Sedentary behaviour is any waking behaviour characterized by very little energy expenditure, while in a sitting, reclining or lying posture.^{35,85}

Key findings

- ★ 12% of adults 18-79 years meet total daily sedentary behaviour guidelines (≤ 8 hours; Statistics Canada, custom tabulation, CHMS, Cycle 6 [2018 and 2019]).
- ★ During COVID-19 lockdowns, 50.1% of participants reported increased sitting and 62.8% reported increased use of screen-based devices for leisure.⁶⁴

How do we improve?

- ✓ Develop sedentary behaviour policies to support adults and older adults, pregnant individuals and people working at desks.
- ✓ Health-care and workplace wellness practitioners should encourage individuals to move their bodies often and take a break from sitting every 30 minutes.

Read the ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults to learn more.

